

Quick Tips for Healthy Collaboration



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Agree on your goals: long-term goals—what will we accomplish this year? Short-term goals—what do we need to do today? This week? Group conflict sometimes arises when goals are not clearly stated.

Agree on group norms: make guidelines, agree to abide by them, and help each other stick to them by respectfully reminding.

Know who is responsible for what: Ask questions. Who is facilitating this meeting? Who will take notes? Who will keep us on track? Who will keep us on time? Who is the leader for this project, and what is each of us responsible for?

Create an atmosphere safe for creativity: Use positive language; no put-downs, and no teasing. Critique work in terms of what worked and what would have made it better. Don't describe the problem; describe the solution.

Allow feelings in the room: feelings are facts; feelings give us important information. Check in briefly at the beginning of each meeting. Acknowledge and accept feelings when they come up.

Allow conflict to happen: conflict is an opportunity for creativity and growth. Let people express their opinions and feelings. Ask questions to get to the needs behind their positions. Work together to invent a creative solution to the conflict—a solution that works for everyone.

Used by permission. Sheila Kerrigan is the author of *The Performer's Guide to the Collaborative Process*, Heinemann, 2001: www.collaborativecreativity.com; www.heinemannndrama.com
Also, check out: *Peoplemaking*, Virginia Satir, Palo Alto, CA, Science and Behavior Books.